

JOSEPH CROWLEY  
14TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS

CHAIRMAN OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3214

October 5, 2017

Honorable Bill de Blasio  
Mayor, City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY, 10007

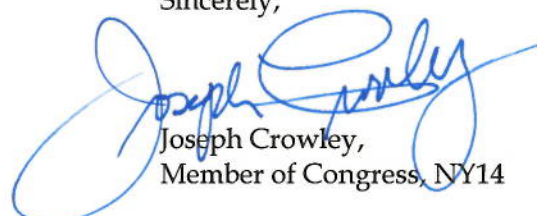
Dear Mayor de Blasio:

My office was recently informed that your administration had placed yet another homeless shelter in my district, with no prior notice, and zero community input. Despite a litany of promises of greater accountability, including at least 30 days' notice, and increased transparency in the process of siting these emergency shelters, this community finds itself once again blindsided with the last-minute announcement of yet another hotel conversion. While I am deeply sympathetic to the plight of homeless families in New York City, your administration has shown a sustained pattern of making promises that you have no intention of keeping regarding these shelters.

Last month, Commissioner Stephen Banks held a press conference outside my Jackson Heights office, announcing the closing of five hotel shelters in Queens, as well as the phasing out of hotel conversions by 2023. Since that announcement, 12 new hotel shelters have been opened across the city, and now another in my district. As I and other local elected representatives have repeatedly pointed out, the use of hotels as shelter sites is problematic for a variety of reasons. Not only are hotels inadequate for meeting homeless families' day-to-day needs, the approach uproots them from their communities, schools and opportunities to get back on their feet. The prevalence of hotels surrounding our airports puts an uneven burden on communities in Queens that are already struggling to meet their own needs. Additionally, the use of hotels for sheltering saddles taxpayers with the exorbitant cost of putting homeless families and individuals up in subpar housing. These funds should instead be put toward a long-term solution that will provide homeless individuals and families with stability.

It is my sincere hope that you will attempt to provide some of the transparency and accountability that our communities were promised. The residents of Queens Community Board 2 deserve a full accounting of what the plans for this location are, who the service provider in charge is, and where they can route any safety concerns that may arise at this location. I would also ask that you arrange for a meeting in my office with the Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services so we can discuss their apparent indifference to the promises of community engagement and rectify this situation for the future.

Sincerely,



Joseph Crowley,  
Member of Congress, NY14